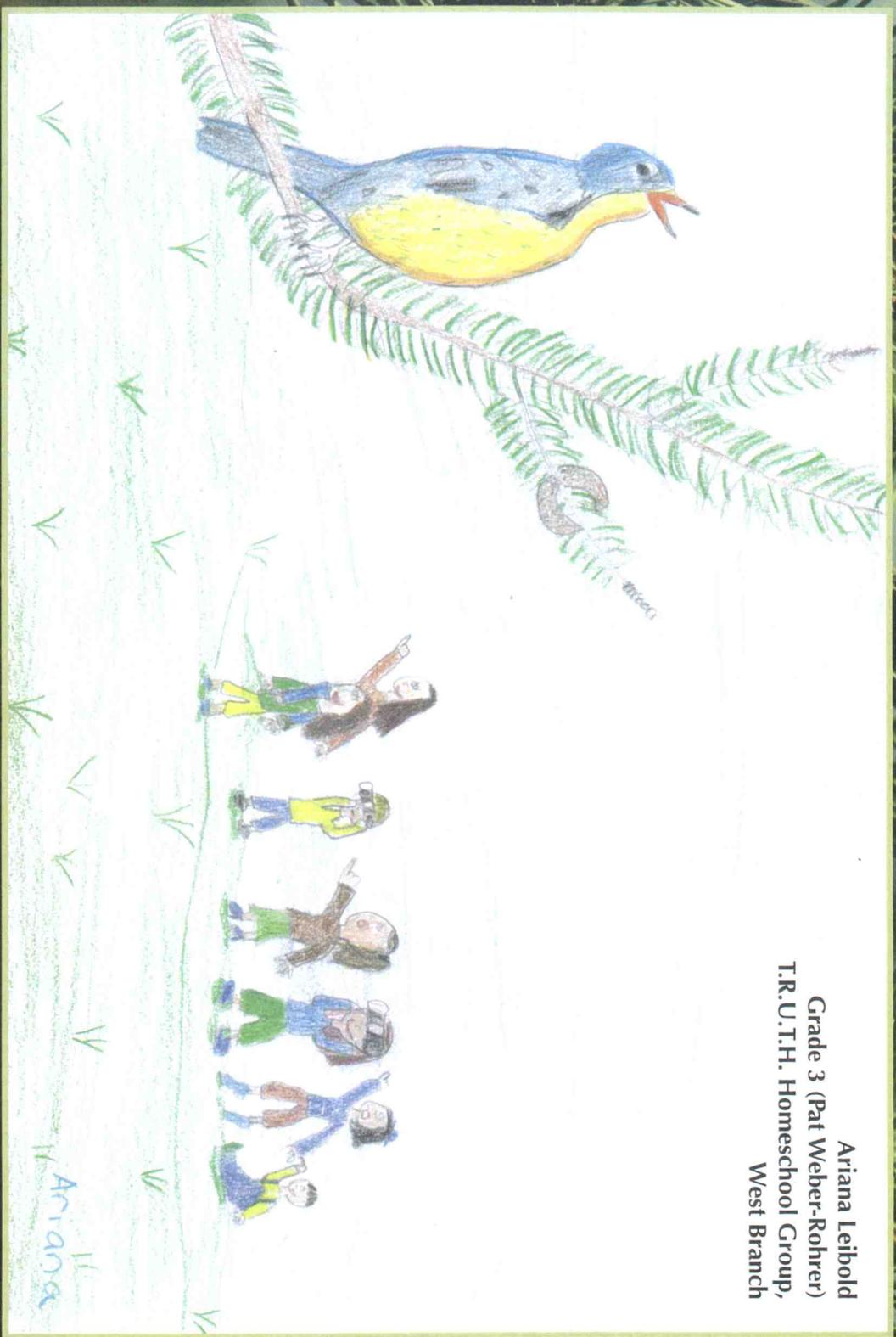


2010-2011 Young Artists Calendar

\$5.00

Ariana Leibold
Grade 3 (Pat Weber-Rohrer)
T.R.U.T.H. Homeschool Group,
West Branch



Kirtland's Warbler
Wildlife Festival
warbler.kirtland.edu



A celebration of the Kirtland's warbler and other wildlife that call Michigan and the Bahamas home!



Danielle Howard
Grade 8 (Mr. Goulette)
Roscommon Middle School,
Roscommon

Get to know two countries' rarest warbler

The Kirtland's warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) is our country's rarest warbler. It was one of the first birds to be placed on the Endangered Species List after passage of the Endangered Species Act of 1973. This small warbler, with its gray-blue back and bright yellow breast, nearly became extinct just a few decades ago.

During spring and summer, most Kirtland's warblers nest in just one place – the jack pine forests of northern Michigan. Within the past decade, however, it has expanded its summer breeding range to parts of Wisconsin and Ontario, Canada.

In the fall, the Kirtland's migrates to The Bahamas where it overwinters before returning in early May.

The bird's near extinction came about primarily because of changes in its habitat.

The warbler nests on the ground beneath the lower branches of jack pine that are between five and 20 feet tall. They prefer a special type of sandy soil found in just a few counties in northern Michigan.

When Europeans began to impact the forests in northern Michigan, the nesting habitat of the Kirtland's began to disappear. Prior to modern fire suppression methods, large natural wildfires frequently burned thousands of acres of jack pine forest in



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northeastern Lower Michigan, providing natural habitat for the warbler.

However, modern fire suppression efforts have substantially decreased the frequency and size of wildfires, significantly reducing the amount of nesting habitat produced for this bird. While fire suppression is necessary to protect human life, property and valuable natural resources, it eliminates a natural disturbance factor on which many species of animals, plants and insects depend.

In addition, Kirtland's warbler nests are parasitized by the brown-headed cowbird. The cowbird lays its eggs in the nests of other birds and has expanded its range into Michigan due to the cutting of forests to create farmland. This parasitism greatly reduces the survival of Kirtland's warbler young.

Today, the Kirtland's warbler is on the comeback because of man's intervention. Harvest of jack pine forests by state and federal agencies

have restored the habitat of the Kirtland's warbler. A brown-headed cowbird trapping program is also maintained.

At one point the total Kirtland's warbler population numbered in the low hundreds. However, the most recent census (June 2010) counted 1,792 singing males.

Jack pine forests are unique ecosystem and their management benefits many other plant and animal species.

